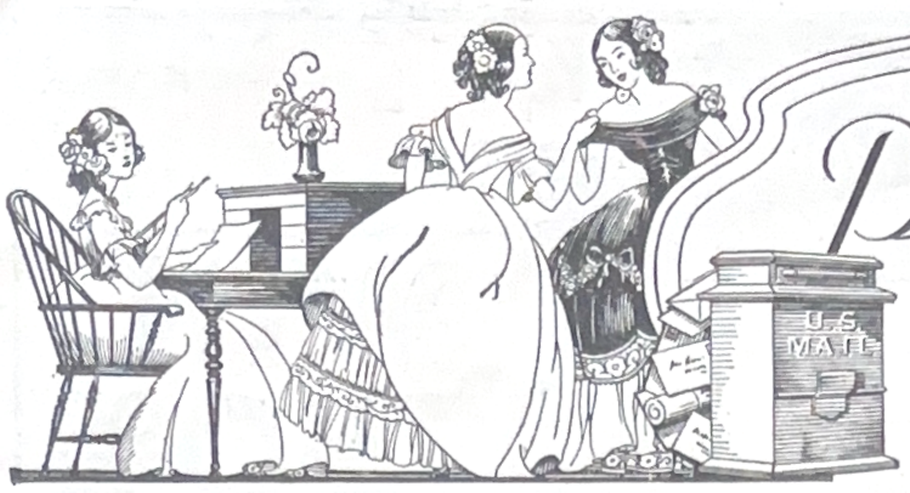
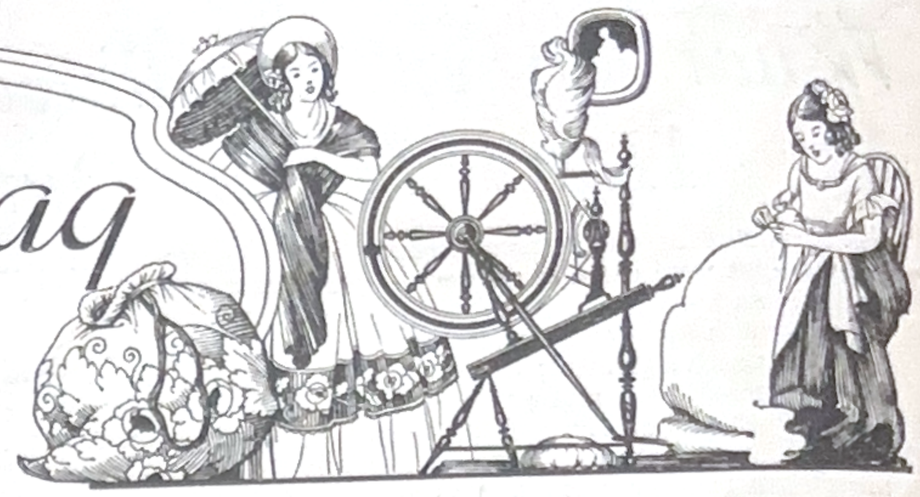


The Piece Bag

Edited by
Amy V. Richards



VALENTINE VARIATIONS — A schoolteacher, who felt that rivalry in valentine giving was bringing unhappiness to some of her flock, decided upon a new program for this red-letter day in the schoolroom. Instead of bringing many valentines for their various classmates, each child was asked to bring two valentines only, without names written upon them.

With the help of the children an unusual valentine box was constructed. A big white house was built from a corrugated box. It had green shutters with hearts cut in them, and a red chimney large enough to allow valentines to drop down its throat easily. Over the doorway they hung a swinging sign, which was a red cardboard heart upon which was lettered, "Ye Inn of Ye Kind Heart."

On St. Valentine's day the children dropped their valentines down the chimney of the Inn. At the close of the school day the youngsters marched around the Inn and reached down the chimney and drew forth one valentine. Then they all wrote their names on a big red heart upon which was lettered, "Greetings from Grade Four." This heart was dropped down the chimney and the Inn, with

the forty valentines still left in it, was sent to the contagious ward at the local hospital.

The whole school program for the day had been filled with "hearty" excitement. Teacher had a small box of red hearts on her desk, and pupils received hearts as rewards for good work and good conduct. These merit-hearts were saved until the close of the lesson periods when the seven holders of the highest number of hearts received "prizes" of plump candy hearts.

Instead of a real spelling lesson the children built as many words as they could contrive beginning with letters in the word Valentine. Teacher had made a simple cross-word puzzle in the shape of a big heart on the board and this was solved with enthusiasm.

When the children trooped home, they were happily conscious of a "big day," much to tell mother about, and the glow of good times shared.

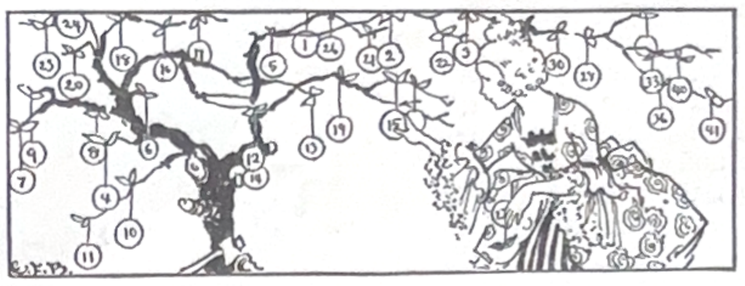
A VALENTINE CAKE — For a February birthday or valentine party table-centerpiece, this festive cake has bright possibilities. A large square or oblong cake-pan is best to use, unless by good fortune, you happen to possess a large heart-shaped pan. Ice the cake with a very delicate pink frosting, and if you have a pastry tube, decorate the cake with true lover's knots in white. You might add a scallopy touch of white around the edges to suggest lace paper.

Dress two little doll figures, a boy and a girl, in party clothes and stand them firmly at the center of the cake. For a facetious touch you might paste a tiny gold heart on the sleeve of each costume. At the four corners of the cake stand little pink cardboard cupid cut-outs with their arrows aimed at the central figures. Then scatter small golden arrows all over the cake. Let some of them stand up in the frosting, and some of them slip over the edge of the cake — indicating that Dan Cupid's aim is poor, or the tiny couple quite impervious to his fire! (Both cupids and arrows can usually be purchased by the box.)

Set the cake on a tray which has been covered with crepe paper frilled on the edges, first white, then pink, the former showing just beyond the edge of the latter; and then place lace-paper doilies on the pink so that the lace edges will come peeping out beneath the edges of the cake when it is placed in the tray.

FRUITFUL CHERRY TREES — Little George Washington's cherry tree episode, whether fact or pleasant fable, has provided no end of material for his birthday-party celebrations. A Cherry Tree Social still has possibilities. Colonial costume is delightful for such an affair, but not necessary. If guests are not costumed, cocked hats may be presented to the gentlemen as favors, and Martha Washington caps to the girls. If preferred, clusters of artificial cherries may be given the gentlemen for boutonnieres, and paired cherries may be given the ladies to wear as earrings.

Keep the decorative scheme to cherry red and white, using a white paper cover on the buffet table and dotting



the cloth with cherry-size red polka dots. Tall crystal compotes filled with round, red, hard candies, red candles in crystal holders, red paper plates and cups, white paper napkins with red dots, will make a sparkling table ensemble.

Serve cherry gelatin with cream, or cherry sundaes, fruit punch with a cherry and mint leaf floating atop each red paper cup. Pass trays of little white frosted cakes, each topped with a maraschino cherry into the stem-end of which has been inserted a tiny white candle. When all the candles are alight, the trays appear to be one large birthday cake.

On one table set up a stout branch of a cherry tree — or as near an approach to it as you can find. From the twigs hang red cardboard cherries strung on fine wire with two green paper leaves attached near the top. Number each cherry. Blindfold the guests in turn, hand the blind-

A SUNNY ROOM IN WINTER

By Grace Noll Crowell

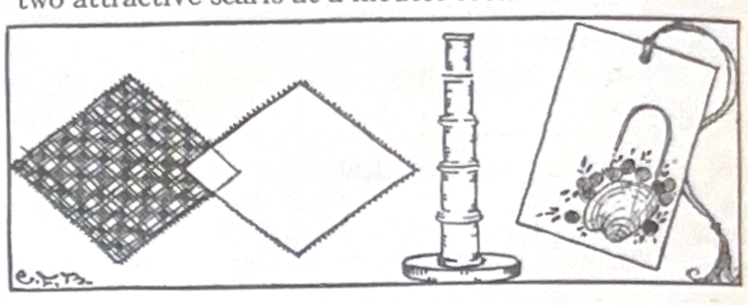
SUMMER is captured here — the warmth and light
Of fire and sun send out their golden glow;
A bright canary trills its keen delight
In liquid notes that leap and splash and flow,
And from a bulb-bowl piercing fronds arise —
A miniature green forest, pebble-strewn,
There is midsummer in the light that lies
Across the rug this winter afternoon.

AND such a sense of peace and deep content
Pervades this old, worn room — such sunny cheer,
So many orderly, safe days are spent
Within its walls — such happiness is here,
So home-sweet are the chairs beside its hearth
To me it is the loveliest room on earth.

folded guest a pair of scissors, and tell him to cut a cherry from the tree. The guest is then entitled to hunt all over the place for a white package with red numbers or a red package with white numbers to correspond to his cherry. Packages are posed on window ledges and in odd corners — not actually concealed, but adding to the colorful decoration. Packages may contain all sorts of nonsensical notions.

If the occasion happens to be one where a bit of money needs to be raised for a worthy cause, a dime may be charged for the privilege of picking cherries from G. Washington's tree. Guests are not blindfolded, but choose with their eyes open, and then exchange their numbered cherries for packages arranged on the table.

HINTS FOR HOMECRAFTERS — Clever little scarfs that are not bunchy at the back of the neck can be made from two eighteen-inch squares of silk or chiffon. The smartest idea is to use one square of figured or plaid silk and one of plain color. Lap the corner of one square upon the other about two inches and baste firmly in place. Then have the squares hemstitched all around for picoting and let the stitching run around the little square-lapped corner. A half yard of plain and a half yard of figured silk in thirty-six-inch material will make two attractive scarfs at a modest cost.



HAT STANDS FROM SPOOLS — These stands make fine busy work for boys on shut-in days, and when nicely lacquered, have a snappy modern look which disguises their humble origin. To make them you need a five-inch circle of wood about one-half an inch thick for the base, and enough spools of graduated sizes to make the stand twelve inches high. Smooth the rough places on the spools with a bit of sand-paper, glue the spools together and glue to the base, dry, and then lacquer or enamel them to fit in with your cupboard color-scheme.

SEA SHELL TALLIES — Wish you could all see the exquisite little tally card sent me by a Florida hostess! They are simple indeed to make, and if one has not access to the fairy treasure of the southern shores, the pretty shells can usually be purchased for a reasonable sum. I am told that these dainty tallies sell for one dollar a dozen and are very profitable to the homecrafter who finds a ready market for them in her locality.

A little fan-shaped shell is used for the basket proper and the tiniest wee shells for the "flowers." The basket is held in place by coating the inside of the shell with glue and filling it with cotton, then pressing this cotton on to the glued surface of the card. A very small drop of glue will hold each flower shell; these are placed with the hollow side up. The basket and flower shells are tinted delicately with water-colors, and tiny green leaves and a basket handle are added with the brush. The card sketched had a pink basket, pastel blue, pink, lavender, and yellow flowers, a deep-rose handle for the basket, and rose pencil cord and tassel.

If you go south this winter, gather a supply of Florida's fascinating shells and make tallies for New England's gift shops next summer!

EDITOR'S NOTE — New ideas for the PIECE BAG are always welcome. Party plans, games, holiday doings, club and church entertainments and bazaar plans, interesting table dress and menus, money-making suggestions for women at home, are all popular with our readers. We will pay one dollar for brief suggestions of all kinds which we can use, and two dollars for good material on social affairs, more complete articles on other subjects, and exceptionally new and clever ideas. Authors' names will not be used as practically all material is rewritten to meet our needs and often several suggestions are combined in one article. No manuscripts will be returned. Payment will be made on publication.

"LOOK-Miss Nobody thinks she can play" someone whispered

—but when she sat down at the piano...

HOW wonderful it all was! And what a surprise, too. Eileen had never expected to be asked to Grace Williams' party. Grace Williams—the leader of the most exclusive set in town. It was like a dream!

Eileen was thrilled beyond words—yet so frightened. What dress would she wear? Would it be smart enough for such a wonderful gathering? Would she feel out of place in such exclusive society? Well, she had already accepted Bill Gordon's invitation, and now she'd have to go through with it.

That night Bill called for her. "You look positively adorable," he told her. Eileen knew that Bill was proud of her—but how would the others feel about her?

The party was in full swing when they arrived. Everything stopped while Eileen was introduced. As she found herself face to face with the smartest social celebrities in town Eileen suddenly realized she had never felt more uneasy in all her life. But that was only the beginning. Later, as conversation lulled, Eileen felt that everyone's eyes were on her. Yes, Eileen admitted to herself, she *did* feel out of place. Oh, if this evening would only end!

And then it happened! It was while they were playing bridge. Eileen couldn't help but overhear.

"Who is that girl with Bill?" she heard someone whisper.

"I never saw her before. Bill met her some place or other. Seems nice enough but nobody of importance, I guess," came the reply.

Eileen blushed to the roots of her hair. So that's what they thought of her! Eileen suddenly grew indignant. She'd show them. Little did she realize how soon her opportunity to "show them" would arrive. Soon the bridge tables were pushed away.

"Where's Jim Blake tonight?" some one asked. "If he were here we could have some music."

"Jim had to go out of town on business," came the answer. Here was Eileen's chance. She'd show this smart set a thing or two. Summoning all her courage she spoke somewhat timidly:

"I think I could play a little if you're not too critical."

There was an embarrassing moment of silence. Eileen promptly became panicky—but realizing that she had to go through with it, she sat down nervously at the piano. Hesitantly she played a few chords—then broke into the haunting strains of "The Pagan Love Song." Her listeners sat spellbound as her fingers skipped lightly over the keys. Never had she played with such inspiration—such complete confidence in herself.

As she struck the last chord there was a burst of loud applause. "More, more," everyone cried. It was almost an hour before they permitted her to rise from the piano. As Eileen stood up she found herself the center of an admiring group.

A glow of pride suffused Bill's face.

"Why, Eileen, I never knew you could play a note," he exclaimed.

"Well, to tell you the truth, I have really only been playing a short while," she answered.

"Why, you play as if you had studied for years. Who was your teacher?" someone asked.

"I had no teacher," Eileen replied.

"Well, how in the world did you ever do it?" they asked.

"It's a secret," said Eileen. And no amount of teasing would make her disclose it.

For Eileen, this night was just the beginning of a new world of pleasures. She became one of the most admired girls in the smartest of society. And all because she found this new secret to popularity.

On the way home, Eileen finally gave in and told Bill the whole story.

I Taught Myself

"You may laugh when I tell you," Eileen began, "but I learned to play at home, without a teacher. I laughed myself when I first saw the U. S. School of Music advertisement. However I sent for the Free Demonstration Lesson. When it came I saw how easy it all was. I sent for the complete course. What pleased me so was that I was playing simple tunes by note from the start. Why, it was just as simple as A-B-C to follow the clear print and picture illustrations that came with the lessons. Now I can play several classics by note and most all the popular music. And, do you know it only averaged a few cents a day!"

* * * * *

This story is typical. The amazing success of the men, women and children who take the U. S. School of Music course is largely due to a newly perfected method that really makes reading and playing music as easy as A-B-C.

Even if you don't know one note from another, you can easily grasp each clear inspiring lesson of this surprising course. You can't go wrong. First you are *told* how to do it, then a picture *shows* you how, and then you do it yourself and *hear* it.

Thus you teach yourself—in your spare time—right in your own home, without any long hours of tedious practice.

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Italian and German Accordion
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Free Book and Demonstration Lesson

Our wonderful illustrated Free Book and our Free Demonstration Lesson explain all about this remarkable method. They prove just how anyone can learn to play his favorite instrument by *note* in almost no time and for a fraction of what old, slow methods cost. The book will also tell you all about the amazing new *Automatic Finger Control*.

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